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A GIFT OF THEMISTOCLES: THE "LUDOVISI
THRONE" AND THE BOSTON RELIEF¹

[PLATES II-V]

ALTHOUGH able archaeologists have studied the "Ludovisi Throne" and the relief of like form and like material which is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, I think it will be generally conceded that they have not yet produced a convincing interpretation of these interesting marbles.

In 1910, Mr. Marshall wrote in the *Burlington Magazine*: "The large three-sided relief added to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is the most important antiquity which has left Italy in the last hundred years. Its beauty and solemnity will impress all who see it and to students whether of Greek art or of Greek religion, it will prove of extraordinary importance."²

In the following year Professor Studniczka published the two reliefs in full as parts of one monument, and such they are in all human probability,³ although the beautiful scroll frame of the Boston marble is absent from the relief in Rome and, on the other hand, superiority of workmanship has been claimed for the "Ludovisi Throne." Even if the same hand did not execute the

¹ A synopsis of this article was read at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America at Ann Arbor, Michigan, December 29, 1921. See *A.J.A.* XXVI, 1922, pp. 81 f.

² Marshall, *Burlington Magazine* XVII, July, 1910, pp. 247 ff., cf. p. 232.

³ Petersen, *Vom alten Rom*.⁴ p. 142. Studniczka, *Jb. Arch. I.* XXVI, 1911, pp. 50-192, gives a complete bibliography of earlier articles. The most noteworthy contributions since 1911 are those by Caskey, *A.J.A.* XXII, 1918, pp. 101-145; Richter, *J.H.S.* XL, 1920, pp. 113-123; Casson, *J.H.S.* XL, 1920, pp. 137-142. To three books my debt is immeasurably great: Jane E. Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*; Sir James Frazer's *Translation with Commentary of Pausanias's Description of Greece*; Salomon Reinach's *Répertoire des vases peints*. Members of the Staff of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts have been most helpful. My thanks are especially due to the Director, Dr. Fairbanks, for practical encouragement, to the Assistant Director (my husband), Charles H. Hawes, for suggestions and criticism which have prevented some serious errors, and to the Curator of the Classical Department, Dr. Caskey, for generously placing his special knowledge of the subject at my disposal.



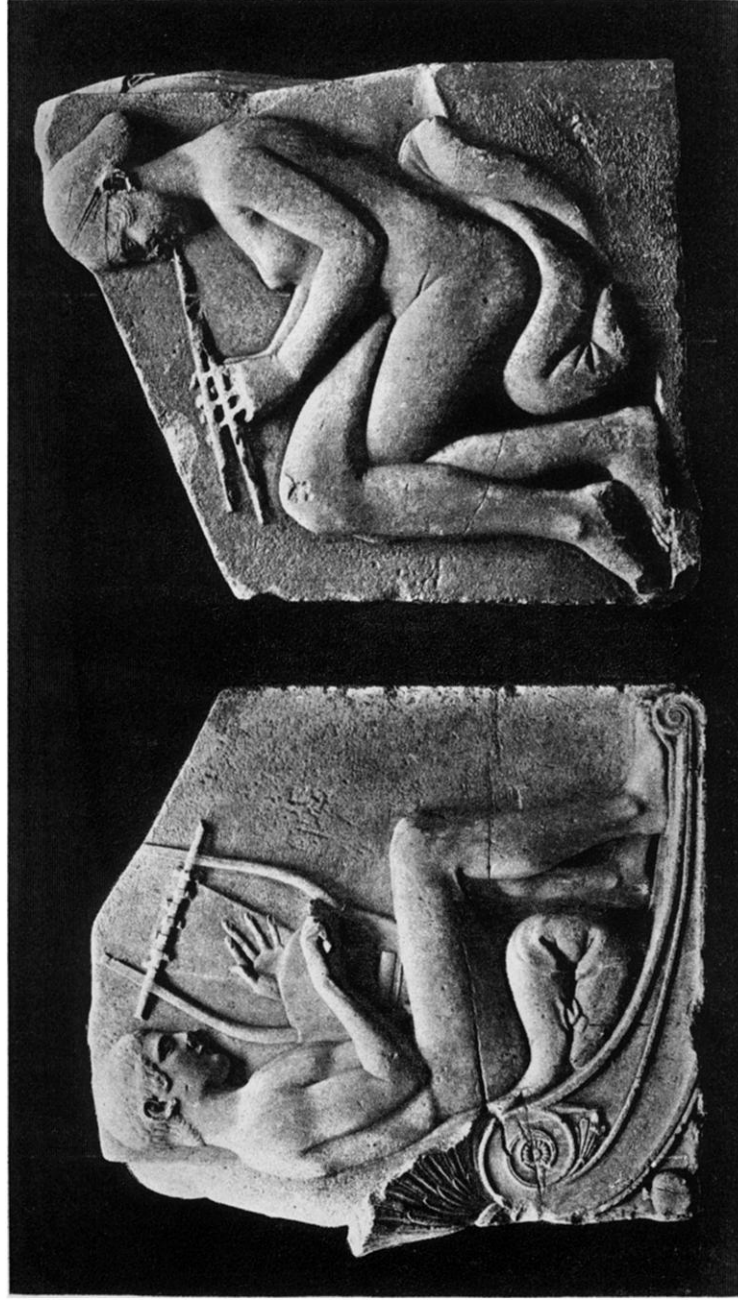
A

E. A. WRIGHT CO. PHILA.

A GIFT OF THEMISTOCLES: A. EARTH AND THE ISMENIAN NYMPHS: ROME.



A GIFT OF THEMISTOCLES: B. PRIESTESS: ROME; C. MINISTRANT: BOSTON.



D

E

E. A. WRIGHT CO. PHILA.

A GIFT OF THEMISTOCLES: D. YOUNG LYCOMID: BOSTON; E. FLUTE-PLAYER: ROME.



F

E. A. WRIGHT CO PHILA

A GIFT OF THEMISTOCLES: F. DEMETER, EROS AND PERSEPHONE: BOSTON.

two ends of the monument, one brain must have conceived the design. The relief in Rome shows signs of having been denuded of a frame similar to that of the Boston marble. Such a frame would have fitted over the plane surfaces at the corners of the "Ludovisi Throne" and would have made it equal in width on the outside, as it actually is on the inside, to the relief in Boston—a point which must be remembered in examining PLATES II–V of this paper.

In presenting a new answer to the riddle of these marbles, my justification lies in the fact that I have followed a method of inquiry hitherto untried and have arrived at results which seem to fit together like the correctly placed parts of a picture puzzle. I have accepted in some cases as proved true, in other cases as proved possible beyond need of further demonstration, certain views held by eminent archaeologists; seeking to combine them in a pattern appropriate to early fifth century, Attic-Ionic art, I have found what appears to me verification in a score of unexpected contacts. Further testing of these contacts is needed and can be obtained I hope through publication of this article in the JOURNAL.

On two points there is almost unanimous agreement among those who have studied the reliefs most carefully: first, that they belong to the Transitional Period of Greek art (480–450 B.C.); second, that they are products of the Attic-Ionic school.¹ There is no question here of a late Greek or Roman copy, although the marbles were found in Rome; in every line and surface the first-hand, Greek character of the work is displayed.

"Original, early fifth-century, Attic-Ionic"—to how few extant monuments can this description be applied! We have here neither isolated figures, nor fragments of a frieze, but the sculptured ends and adjoining side pieces of a monument which probably had no other equally important parts, so that we are free to judge the artist's scheme of composition and to learn from it. In less than fifty years after the making of these reliefs, the Parthenon marbles were carved under the supervision of Phidias. Can we find in our reliefs any forecast of their glory? Is it audacious to think (1) that these reliefs are too beautiful to have been altogether without fame, (2) that the surest way to interpret may be to identify them?

¹ *E.g.* Studniczka, *op. cit.* pp. 190 ff.; Caskey, *op. cit. passim* and pp. 120, 145.

An excavator often begins with the smallest clue. On the Boston relief the smallest objects are the pomegranate and the fish. They occur at the corners of the end (PLATE V, F), which has the winged figure in the centre. The fish at the left lower corner is so badly injured that it might not be recognized if it were not repeated on the adjoining side (PLATE III, C). We know that the pomegranate and fish were food forbidden to initiates in the famous Mysteries of the Great Goddesses Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis,¹ as well as to those taking part in the Athenian Mysteries of the Haloa,² which were celebrated in honor of Demeter and Dionysus.

From these minor objects one looks to the womanly figures above them. Are they mortal? It is hardly normal that they should be mortal, for they are on the end of a fifth century oblong monument that probably follows the same canons of composition as are observed on temples of that period and evidently they are not attendants on the central supermortal figure or in action dominated by him. If they are immortal, can it be doubted who they were in early fifth century Attica? Two goddesses, seated, facing each other, almost replicas one of the other—beside them the forbidden food of Eleusis—I think every peasant in old Attica would have named them at once, Demeter and the Maid.

To distinguish between the goddesses is difficult; as Miss Harrison has wisely said, "Not infrequently when they appear together it is impossible to say which is which."³ But if, laying aside our own prepossessions, we follow the indications of early Greek iconography, I think we must decide that the goddess on the right with the pomegranate beside her is Persephone. Again and again in early Greek art when the goddesses confront each other, seated or standing, with either a male figure, a group of persons, or an inanimate object between them, if they *can* be distinguished, the one on the right is found to be Persephone, the one on the left Demeter.

A celebrated example of this arrangement and one that may have influenced the sculptor of our monument is the Harpy relief of sixth century date from Xanthos in Lycia. This shows Demeter enthroned at the left and Persephone at the right of a proces-

¹ Porphyry. *de Abst.* IV, 16, cited by Harrison, *op. cit.* pp. 149, 150.

² Luc. *Dial. Meretr.* VII, 4, quoted in full by Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 148, note 1.

³ Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 273.

sion of mortals; Persephone holds the flower of the pomegranate in her right hand, the fruit in her left hand; the mortals are making their way towards Persephone, in other words are passing to the underworld. Other well-known examples are the famous Eleusinian relief, of about 460 B.C., an early red-figured scyphus from Eleusis,¹ and the beautiful Hieron cotyle in the British Museum;² on all three we see Demeter at the left and Persephone at the right of the Attic hero, Triptolemus. Many vases have Demeter at the left and Persephone at the right of a male god or hero;³ one vase shows Demeter at the left and Persephone at the right of a column.⁴

On two of the early Attic-Ionic vases decorated with eyes, there is a marked contrast in the costume of the goddesses, Persephone being wrapped in her



FIGURE 1.—DEMETER, PLUTO AND PERSEPHONE:
SHERD FROM ELEUSIS.

mantle as on the Boston relief, Demeter wearing hers in freer fashion; one of these vases follows the normal order,⁵ the other the reverse order.⁶ But the reverse order remains rare.⁷ Romaïos interprets also in the reverse sense a very interesting polychrome sherd from Eleusis (Fig. 1)⁸ of Ionic style (*ca.* 530 B.C.), but he

¹ Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 273, fig. 66.

² Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 556, fig. 158.

³ Reinach, *op. cit.* II, pp. 33, 34, 45, 184, 324 (4).

⁴ Reinach, *op. cit.* II, p. 321 (5).

⁵ A black-figured hydria; Reinach, *op. cit.* II, p. 61 (7).

⁶ A black-figured cylix; Böhlau, *Ath. Mitt.* 1900, p. 63, fig. 25 (see Fig. 2).

⁷ For reverse arrangement see Reinach, *op. cit.* II, pp. 187 (5), 199 (2), which is probably a forgery, and 324 (3).

⁸ *Ath. Mitt.* 1906, p. 186, pl. XVII.

admits that the object in the hand of the goddess at the right, which he calls a rose, is exactly like one called by Gerhard elsewhere a pomegranate flower; and we are left to infer that if one decides in favor of the pomegranate, the right-hand goddess must be Persephone. The presence of the snake on the right side of the composition favors this choice. Pluto (or Hades-Dionysus) appears to be arguing his case with Demeter, showing her, as in the "flash-back" of a modern cinema, that he has a right to retain her daughter, because she has tasted the pomegranate. Even on much later vases, painted when iconography had become slack, the arrangement here cited as normal is much more frequent than the contrary one. Our artist has not misplaced his pomegranate.

The right-hand figure on the Boston end is strikingly like certain figures on Attic grave reliefs; the comparison has been made by others and I am much impressed by it. One can not always decide which figure on a Greek grave stele represents the dead, but the better the artist, the easier the choice; for no matter how the figure is posed, the first-rate sculptor manages to give to it a spiritual remoteness, an appearance of being withdrawn from the emotions of our mortal life, that is very remarkable. The only exception seems to be in the case of the mother whose yearning for her child remains unstilled by death. This same remoteness I find in the right-hand goddess of the Boston relief.¹ She has no regard whatever for the two other personages in the composition. Her mantle is drawn about her as if she were ready for departure, a detail we have already noted on two early Attic-Ionic black-figured vases. Of these the Berlin cylix—which I have cited as an example of reverse arrangement—deserves special attention (Fig. 2). At a later point in our study we shall be interested in the horn held by Hades-Dionysus; at present we note that the animated gesture of the right hand goddess on the cylix and the drooping attitude of the left-hand goddess have much in common with the goddesses on the Boston relief, reversing their positions.

The goddess on the left in Boston is not aloof, remote, passive. She looks across to the other goddess and, perhaps, to the figure between them, with hand raised in a gesture that is meant to express and command attention; it may mean surprise, remon-

¹ Our relief may afford a clue for the identification of the so-called "Penelope." Cf. *Ath. Mitt.* 1911, p. 122, fig. 47.

strance, farewell, or joy, triumph, greeting.¹ One archaeologist has detected sadness in the expression of this left-hand goddess;² usually she is held to be joyful. We know, however, that the archaic Greek sculptor had but one facial expression at his command to express all sorts of animation. The artist who carved the Boston relief was far more expert; nevertheless, he may have been influenced by conservative traditions when fashioning immortals from which he was free when carving human figures. I think we shall do well not to stress the smile that appears in



FIGURE 2.—PERSEPHONE, HADES-DIONYSUS AND DEMETER: CYLIX IN BERLIN.

greater or less degree on three of the four faces on the ends of this monument.

Miss Harrison has reminded us that, under the influence of the Mysteries, the Mother and the Daughter, who had been one goddess originally, became differentiated. ". . . the Mother is more and more of the upper air, the Daughter of the underworld. . . . The Daughter, at first but the young form of the Mother, . . . withdraws herself more and more to the kingdom of the spirit, the things below and beyond."³ To explain her meaning more fully, she quotes aptly from Swinburne's *Garden of Persephone*:

"She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born,
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn,

¹ That the gesture of the goddess I have called Demeter need not be one of joy or triumph is proved by the same gesture used by Eurystheus to express alarm (Reinach, *op. cit.* I, p. 153, 3). This fact was pointed out to me by Dr. Caskey, who assures me the outspread hand is used by vase-painters with widely different meanings. On the Boston relief it appears to mean surprise, protest, argument, as on the sherd from Eleusis (see Fig. 1).

² F. J. Mather, *Nation*, 1909, p. 495, "the seated figure at the left raises her hand in sorrow. . . ."

³ Harrison, *op. cit.* pp. 275, 276.

And spring and seed and swallow
 Take wing for her and follow
 Where summer song rings hollow
 And flowers are put to scorn."

This verse embodies the very thought that eludes but charms us in the Boston relief, underlying the extraordinary beauty of Demeter and the Maid.

But who is the figure between the goddesses, weighing the lots of men? All have agreed that he is Eros—not, however, a playful boy or a mischievous spirit like Cupid, but Love the Master of Life. In technical language he is the *Ker* of Life weighing the *keres* or *eidola* of men. This is the old conception, before the *ker* had been specialized down to death, while it still meant "more a man's luck than his fate."¹ Each little man is tugging at the weight, trying to turn Love's balance in his favor. *The goddesses are not watching the weights.* It is a question whether either of them sees Eros, although it may be that Demeter sees and protests. If so, the protest is not against his weighing of human lots—a proper function appropriately represented—but against the fact which every Greek peasant knew well, that through Love Hades stole Persephone from her Mother and through Love he made her eat the pomegranate that kept her with him in the underworld six months of every year; that made her, in fact half-mortal.

This figure represents not Eros, youngest of the gods, son of Aphrodite, but Eros the cosmic spirit, who, according to Olen the Lycian, author of the oldest Greek hymns, was a son of Ilithyia.² As son of Ilithyia and, therefore, a member of the oldest, pre-Olympic circle of divinities, Eros was especially worshipped in Boeotia. "Of all the gods," says Pausanias, "the Thespians honor Eros the most and have always done so; they have a very ancient image of him, consisting of an unwrought stone."³ He is

¹ Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 185. Miss Harrison calls this older Eros "Lord of Life and Death," quotes Plato (*Symp.* 189) and Euripides of Phlya (*Hipp.* 535) in his behalf and ascribes to him the Graeco-Roman title Proteurythmos (*op. cit.* pp. 657-659). On a late vase Hades is represented as carrying off Persephone in his chariot, Persephone takes a touching leave of her Mother, Love hovers above the horses, as if guiding them to the underworld, Reinach, *op. cit.* II, p. 309; a similar scene occurs in Reinach, *op. cit.* I, p. 156.

² Paus. IX, 27, 2.

³ Paus. IX, 27, 1.

seldom named in the legends and myths of Greece, but he is the power behind every throne, human or divine, as well as the spirit that in early Greek thought animated nature. Homer does not mention him; Hesiod ranks him supreme not merely as the god of sensual love, but as a power which forms the world by inner union of the separate elements. Elsewhere I have given reasons for thinking that Hesiod represents an older stratum of Greek thought than Homer.¹ In the fourth century both Praxiteles and Lysippus made statues of Eros for the Thespians. The Boston relief shows us an earlier Eros, most important as establishing the early fifth century Attic-Ionic type. Strength and grace are wonderfully combined in his youthful figure; the wings will sustain him; they are perfectly proportioned and form a most beautiful background for the shoulders, made powerful by their use.

Eros, Demeter and the Maid—this is an unusual combination; were they ever worshipped together? Miss Harrison, following Pausanias, tells us there was such joint worship at one place—and so far as I know at one place only in the Greek world.² The place was Phlya, a deme of Attica which belonged originally to the ancient tribe, Cecropis; Sir James Frazer identifies it with the modern village Chalandri, one of the largest and most thriving villages in the Athenian plain, about five miles northeast of Athens itself. "The district is well watered and fertile."

There is nothing here to contradict our basic assumptions. The place is a fitting home for Attic art that shows strong Ionic influence. The next question is as to time. Have we any record of a monument erected at Phlya in the Transitional Period, that is, in the years between the Persian Wars and the Age of Pericles? Plutarch has a word on the subject. In the first paragraph of his *Life of Themistocles* we read: "However it is certain that he (Themistocles) had a connection with the house of the Lycomids (τοῦ Λυκομιδῶν γένους μετέιχε), for Simonides records that he rebuilt the shrine of initiation (τελεστήριον) at Phlya belonging to that family, and beautified it with pictures and other ornaments, after it had been burnt by the Persians." This rebuilding is of para-

¹ *Gournia*, pp. 11, 12; *Crete the Forerunner of Greece*, p. 149.

² Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 645: "At Phlya . . . we have the worship of the great Earth-goddess who was Mother and Maid in one, and, conjointly, we have the worship of the Orphic spirit of love and life, Eros."

mount importance to us, for it must have happened soon after 480 B.C., at just about the time our reliefs were made.¹

Suppose, then, we assume as a working hypothesis that the reliefs are from this telesterion of the Lycomids at Phlya which was rebuilt by Themistocles in the decade following the second Persian War; are we helped in interpreting them? It will be necessary to review our information on Phlya to answer the question. The process may be dull, but it yields results.

In the thirty-first chapter of his first book, Pausanias discusses the small townships of Attica. I use Sir James Frazer's translation:

"The small townships of Attica, taking them in order of situation, offer the following notable features. . . .² At Phlya there are altars of Dionysus-given Apollo and Light-bringing Artemis, and Flowery Dionysus, and the Ismenian Nymphs, and Earth, whom they name the Great Goddess. Another temple contains altars of Demeter, the Sender-up of Gifts and of Zeus, god of Acquisition, and of Athena Tithrone, and of the First-born Maid, and of the goddesses named Venerable."

Here is a quaint assemblage of divinities; Apollo, Athena, Dionysus all bear epithets unknown for them elsewhere. At Phlya Pausanias does not name Zeus in his majesty, but as a

¹ It may have been through his mother that Themistocles attached himself to the Lycomid clan and their well-known Orphic cult. His father was "an Athenian of no distinction." His mother was a foreigner, and this fact created the barrier which separated him from youths who were of unmixed Athenian parentage; but she is reputed to have been from Thrace or Caria, and either origin would suggest old Aegean connections of race and religion that might give her some claim to the friendship of the Lycomids. According to a tradition accepted by Pausanias, the Lyceum at Athens took its name from Lycus, son of Pandion, the name-hero of the Lycomids. It was certainly frequented by men of the bluest blood in the city. It stood next to the Cynosarges, the gymnasium for the base-born, where Themistocles was obliged to exercise. We are told that he contrived to efface the humiliating distinction by persuading some well-born youths to take their exercise with him there. We are not told that they were Lycomids but it seems probable. Some day it may be proved that the downfall of Themistocles, like many other unexplained facts in Greek history, was due to the persistent rivalry between Hellenic and Aegean elements in the Greek population.

² I pass over the first three divisions of the chapter merely noting that the townships (demes) of Alimus and Prospalta had sanctuaries of Demeter and the Maid, and Anagyrus had a sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods; as was to be expected these demes, these "pagi," were conservative, true to the older worship of the land.

homely domestic god (κτήσιος), guardian of the peasant's humble wealth, especially of his lucky finds. "Earth, whom they name the Great Goddess . . . Demeter, the Sender-up of Gifts . . . the First-born Maid . . . and the Goddesses named Venerable"—these are the august unchanging divinities of the Greek peasant faith at Phlya.

We have here no mention of Eros and in no other passage does Pausanias refer directly to the deme Phlya; but using the clue given us by Plutarch quoted above, we can gather from Pausanias several additional items of information as to cults that flourished within the deme. He is thoroughly aware of the fact that the great aristocratic clan of the Lycomids had interesting family rites connected with the deme Phlya, for hear him on the subject of Phlyus, name-hero of the deme, and Lycus, name-hero of the clan.¹ "The Athenians say that Phlyus himself was the Son of Earth and they are supported by the hymn which Musaeus composed on Demeter for the Lycomids." Lycus "raised to higher honor" in Arcadia "the Mysteries of the Great Goddesses," which were held to have been introduced by a grandson of Phlyus.

These men belong to myth, but in historic times there lived a man named Methapus, by descent an Athenian, "a deviser of mysteries and all sorts of orgies," for whom it was claimed that he "purified the paths of Demeter and of the First-born Maid," in the rites which had been introduced into Arcadia by Phlyus and raised to higher honor by Lycus. The statue of Methapus on which this claim was inscribed was set up, Pausanias relates, in a *klision* of the Lycomids.² Pausanias does not locate this *klision*, but Frazer in commenting on the passage did not hesitate to write: "The 'chapel of the Lycomids' to which Pausanias here refers was no doubt the one at Phlya in Attica."

Further on in this article something will be said in regard to the curious word (κλίσιον) in this passage which Frazer translates "chapel." The translator believes that Methapus revived the Arcadian rites after the victory of Epaminondas at Leuctra in 371 B.C. He says: "Since the statue of Methapus stood in

¹ Paus. IV, 1, 5 and 6. Mr. Champlin Burrage tells me that he has read the name *Lukos* on an early Aegean seal. His article entitled 'Studies in Minoan Hieroglyphics, I, The Phaestos Whorl,' which has recently appeared in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, gives but a hint of the mass of material on old Aegean scripts which he hopes soon to publish in book form.

² Paus. IV, 1, 7.

the chapel of the Lycomids, we may conclude that Methapus was a Lycomid himself." He thinks Methapus composed the epigram on his own statue and erred, through a mistaken etymology, in attributing the origin and exaltation of the Mysteries in Arcadia to the mythical Phlyus and Lycus; but if this mistake was made, it was certainly due to a habit of associating the Lycomids with Phlya and the rites of the Goddesses.

The existence of this association of ideas in Greek minds of the fourth century is thus established in the first chapter of the fourth book of Pausanias; our good guide accepts it. We are, therefore, justified in supposing that whenever he speaks elsewhere of the rites of the Lycomids without further qualification, he is referring to the clan's family worship at Phlya. Let us continue our quest.

In describing the contents of the picture gallery in the north wing of the Propylaea at the entrance of the Acropolis, Pausanias mentions a picture of Musaeus. He adds this noteworthy comment: "I have read verses in which it is said that Musaeus received from the North Wind the gift of flying; but I believe that the verses were composed by Onomacritus and that nothing can with certainty be ascribed to Musaeus *except the hymn which he made on Demeter for the Lycomids.*"¹ We have already seen that Pausanias, in his account of Arcadia, refers to this hymn on Demeter, composed by Musaeus for the Lycomids, as verifying the statement of the Athenians that "Phlyus himself was the Son of Earth."

Again, in mentioning the Thespian worship of Love and the famous statue of Eros made by Praxiteles for the Thespians, Pausanias writes: "The general impression is that Love is the youngest of the gods and that he is a son of Aphrodite. But Olen the Lycian, author of the oldest Greek hymns says in his hymn to Ilithyia that she is the mother of Love. After Olen were the poets Pamphos and Orpheus, *both of whom composed poems on Love to be sung by the Lycomids at the performance of their rites.*" At the grave of the Muses on Mount Helicon, Pausanias has much to say of Orpheus and ends his discourse with these words: "Whoever has studied poetry knows that all the hymns of Orpheus are very short, and that their total number is not large. *They are known to the Lycomids, who chant them at the celebration of the rites.* For poetical beauty they may rank

¹ Paus. I, 22, 7.

next to the hymns of Homer, and they have received still higher marks of divine favor."¹

We have learned, therefore, from Pausanias that the Lycomids in their "chapel" at Phlya sang hymns of the mystic poets—a hymn on Demeter composed for them by Musaeus and hymns on Love composed for them by Orpheus and Pamphos. Pamphos also wrote verses on "The Maid, the daughter of Demeter."²

All these passages in Pausanias make it highly probable that an artist decorating the chapel of the Lycomids at Phlya in the early fifth century would give a conspicuous place to Demeter, Persephone and Eros; such a place they have in the monument of which the Boston relief is a part.

But we must not forget that at Phlya there was one divinity even more revered than the three just named. Pausanias in his description of the deme mentioned an altar of "Earth, whom they name the Great Goddess." Frazer in his commentary sends us to a Christian author who appears to have been a younger contemporary of Pausanias. St. Hippolytus in his *Refutation of all Heresies*,³ discussing the doctrine of the Sethites, a Gnostic sect, tells us that the entire system of their doctrine was derived from Musaeus and Linus and from Orpheus "who elucidates especially the ceremonies of initiation as well as the mysteries themselves." He continues: "These Bacchic rites of Orpheus were celebrated in Phlium of Attica before the rite of initiation was established in Eleusis; for older than the Eleusinian Mysteries are the orgies in Phlium of her they named the Great One." Frazer identifies Phlium of Attica with the deme Phlya.

This passage is most important. It points to the existence of a tradition that the Mysteries at Phlya of Earth, the Great Goddess, antedated the Mysteries at Eleusis of the Great Goddesses, Demeter and the Maid. Evidently we can hardly overestimate the ancient prestige of Phlya in the matter of mysteries. This explains (1) why Arcadians were proud to claim that Phlyus,

¹ Paus. IX, 30, 12.

² Paus. IX, 31, 9.

³ St. Hippolytus, Bk. V, ch. XV. τετέλεσται δὲ ταῦτα (τὰ βακχικὰ τοῦ Ὀρφέως) . . . πρὸ τῆς . . . ἐν Ἐλευσίνι τελετῆς, ἐν Φλοιούντι τῆς Ἀττικῆς, πρὸ γὰρ τῶν Ἐλευσινίων μυστηρίων ἐστὶν [τὰ] ἐν τῇ Φλοιούντι τῆς λεγομένης Μεγάλης ὄργια. ἔστι δὲ παστὰς ἐν αὐτῇ· ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς παστάδος ἐγγέγραπται μέχρι σήμερον ἡ πάντων τῶν εἰρημένων λόγων ἰδέα. Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς παστάδος ἐκείνης ἐγγεγραμμένα· περὶ ὧν καὶ Πλούταρχος ποιεῖται λόγους ἐν ταῖς πρὸς Ἐμπεδοκλέα δέκῃ βίβλοις.

son of Earth, brought them their mysteries, (2) why Methapus, "deviser of mysteries and all sorts of orgies," had his statue in the "chapel" of the Lycomids at Phlya, (3) why the epigram on his statue represented him as saying

"And I marvelled how Lycus, son of Pandion,
Established all the sacred rites of Atthis in Andania,"

(4) why, when the great Attic family of Triptolemus became extinct, a century after our reliefs were executed, the office of second priest or Torchbearer at Eleusis, which that family had always held, was given to the Lycomids of Phlya.¹

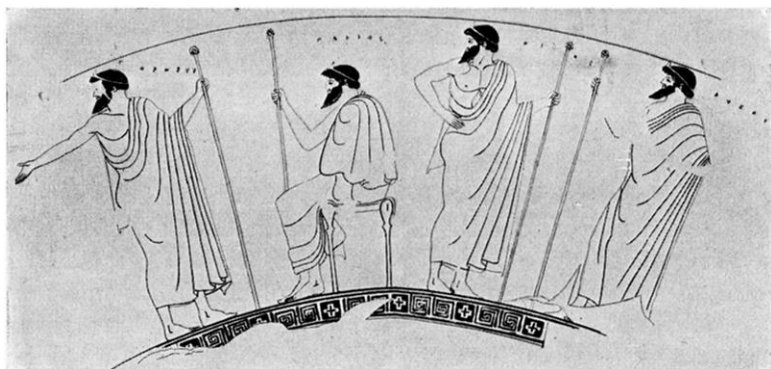


FIGURE 3.—"SONS OF EARTH": ORNEUS, PALLAS, NISUS AND LYCUS:
CRATER FROM THE ACROPOLIS.

It is certain that the historic clan of the Lycomids attached itself particularly to a family cult of Demeter, Eros and the Maid, but it cannot have neglected the even older deme cult of the Great Goddess, Mother Earth. In fact, it claimed descent from Lycus, son of Pandion, son of Erechthonius, son of Earth (see Fig. 3), just as the deme of Phlya as a whole claimed descent from Phlyus, son of Earth, when they took him for their name-hero.²

¹ Xen. *Hell.* 3, 3, quoted by Ridgeway, *Dramas and Dramatic Dances*, p. 29. To Sir William Ridgeway my debt is exceedingly great, since it is his spirit that has put reality into the legends of Greece.

² J. Toepffer, *Attisches Genealogie*, III, *Der Attische Landesadel*: *Δηκόμυδαι*, pp. 208-225. Toepffer shows a connection between Phlya and the Haloa (p. 213), and between Phlya and the cult of the Argive Hera (p. 214); this is interesting in view of Casson's attempt to prove that the Ludovisi Throne was associated with the cult of the Argive Hera, *J.H.S.* XL, 1920, pp. 137 ff. Toepffer admits a close connection between Phlya, Eleusis and Andania, but

Greek piety would oblige the Lycomids to give to their divine Mother the place of greatest honor in their sanctuary. If they were erecting an oblong monument, in shape not unlike a temple, supposing for our convenience that it was oriented, they would give the central position at the east end to the great Mother Goddess.

There is no central figure of a goddess on the Boston relief; let us consider, then, for convenience, that this is the west end of our monument, and look to the relief in the Museo delle Terme, Rome, the so-called "Ludovisi Throne," which is now generally acknowledged to be the opposite end of the same monument (PLATE II, A). Here we have, I believe, a figure that fulfills the requirements in a most interesting fashion. The archaeologists who have written on this relief are divided into two camps, those who see in the central figure a goddess being born (Aphrodite) and those who see in it a goddess giving birth. I do not hesitate to align myself with the latter. I do not agree with Studniczka, that the sculptor of the relief in the Museo delle Terme would have thought fit to represent the act of childbearing, if he set about it, with more precision than he has shown. He was not a vase-painter, not a maker of terra-cottas. He was not choosing his theme; his theme was chosen for him by the traditions of the place and by persons for whom this important commission was undertaken. The space at his command was determined by the special shape required for this monument. He did not need to be specific; all who saw the monument would be well versed in its interpretation. It was not intended for export as were so many of the vases and terra-cottas, and the people of Attica knew their mythology. He was free to work as an artist, with supreme aims of beauty of composition and of line. To introduce in the place of honor on such a monument the painful, unbeautiful details of childbearing would have offended Attic taste of the early fifth century immeasurably.¹ The screen, the

rightly insists that this connection antedated the Mysteries and was actually based on the indigenous worship of the Great Goddess (and her counterparts, the Great Goddesses), not on any acts of the legendary heroes, Phylus and Lycus.

¹ In supposing that the east pediment of the Parthenon showed Athena as a small figure actually springing from the head of Zeus in the manner of vase-paintings, Miss Harrison failed to credit Phidias with a comprehension of the essential difference between the demands of sculpture and pottery, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens*, p. 434.

uplifted arms of the goddess, the gentle but firm support given by her attendants, were enough to embody for the people the tradition they knew so well. They were enough to convey the idea to me before I had read a single authority endorsing it.

Parallels are not lacking. The beautiful upturned head of the goddess seems to have been copied by the contemporary maker



FIGURE 4.—THE BIRTH OF ERECHTHONIUS:
TERRA-COTTA IN BERLIN.

of a rude terra-cotta relief now in the Berlin Museum, which represents the birth of Erechthonius. Mother Earth gives the child to Athena in the presence of Cecrops, the mythical ancestor of the tribe Cecropis, to which the family of the Lycomids originally belonged (Fig. 4).¹ The Earth Mother with upstretched arms and supporting attendants is found on an early

stamped Boeotian amphora in the National Museum at Athens.² In pre-Hellenic days the supreme Goddess creatrix was represented again and again with upstretched arms, by the makers of crude images, *e.g.* in the shrine at Gournia, Crete.³

Our artist was content to represent Earth "the Mother of us all," and I doubt whether his orders had been more explicit. But no doubt many an eager discussion took place before his exquisite figure, if our hypothesis is correct that it stood in the sanctuary at Phlya. A Lycomid might assert, "Of course this is the Great Mother giving birth to my ancestor, Erechthonius"; his humbler townsmen might retort, "No, it is Mother Earth bearing our ancestor, Phlyus." An Orphic, remembering Olen,

¹ Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens*, p. xxvii, fig. 2, and Reinach, *Répertoire des reliefs*, II, p. 14. Cf. a British Museum hydria, Reinach, *Répertoire des vases peints*, II, p. 77 (10).

² Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 264, 265, figs. 60, 61.

³ *E.g.* Hawes, *Gournia*, pl. XI, 1.

might whisper to himself, "It must be Ilithyia, mother of Love"; or Euripides may have seen in it Semele, mother of Dionysus, supported by the Ismenian nymphs. For Semele is but another form of Earth;¹ Pausanias mentions the Ismenian nymphs together with "Earth whom they name the Great Goddess," when he enumerates the altars at Phlya,² and in his *Bacchae* Euripides of Phlya associates "Ismenus' shore"³ with the birth of Dionysus and links Dionysus with Love.⁴ As a boy the great dramatist (born in the year of Salamis) must have heard the Lycomids sing their Orphic hymns in praise of Eros, and must have watched the restoration of their sanctuary; our reliefs may have played an important part in forming his ideas. He must have known the tradition, surprising to us, that placed a House of Lycus beside the Tomb of Semele near the Ismenus.⁵ We should sin against the spirit of the major arts of the early fifth century if we tried to decide between these four versions—all of them possible, not one of them essential.

It is now time to determine if possible the character of the monument. On this point I follow Petersen in believing that the reliefs are parts of a ritual couch or couch-altar.⁶ Now the Greek word for couch is *κλινή*, and we have seen that Pausanias calls the "chapel" of the Lycomids at Phlya the *κλίσιον*, or Place of the Couch, a word nowhere else applied to a sanctuary.⁷ St. Hippolytus, in a continuation of the passage already quoted, says that at Phlya there was a *παστάς*, a word which is often used of a bridal chamber, therefore reasonably of a small sanctuary that contained a ritual couch or couch-altar.⁸

¹ Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 405.

² Paus. I, 31, 4.

³ *Bacchae* 7. The Ismenus is a river of Boeotia flowing north from Thebes. A fifth century inscription from Thebes mentions a sanctuary of Earth in that neighborhood and uses two Orphic epithets for the Goddess. Earth-born Dionysus is pictured on two red-figured vases in British collections. Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 405, fig. 128, and p. 406, fig. 129; p. 408, note 1 and p. 409.

⁴ *Bacchae*, 769.

⁵ Paus. IX, 16, 7.

⁶ Petersen, *Vom alten Rom*⁴, pp. 143, 145.

⁷ Cf. Paus. IV, 1, 7.

⁸ The latter part of this passage refers without doubt to mural paintings, but I see no reason for Miss Harrison's belief that it is one of these paintings which Hippolytus describes in a later chapter. On the contrary the mural painting described by Hippolytus appears to belong to a wholly different building from the *pastas*.

Nor do I think that we are dependent entirely on literary evidence for endorsement of the view that our monument is a couch-altar and stood within a sanctuary. The excellent preservation of the marble surface would have been impossible in a less sheltered position. A fine red-figured crater in the Hermitage Museum,¹ ascribed by Beazley to "the Kleophon painter"² who

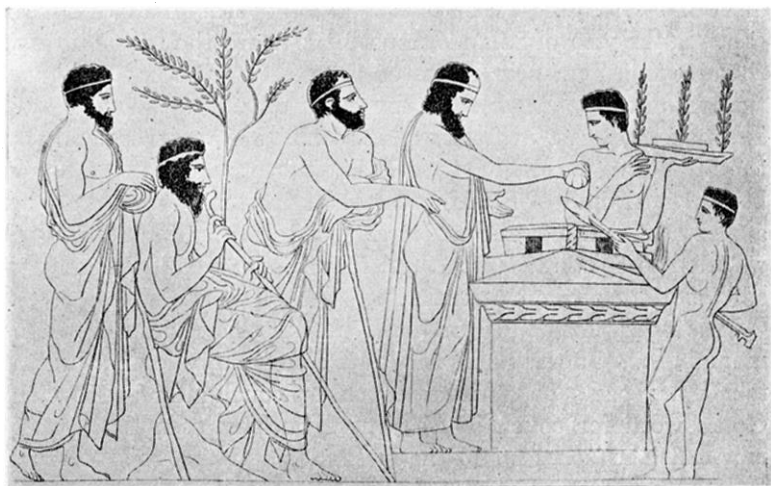


FIGURE 5.—SACRIFICE AT A FAMILY ALTAR: RED-FIGURED CRATER IN HERMITAGE MUSEUM.

worked in the middle of the fifth century, shows men and boys of the best Athenian types engaged in sacrifice at a family altar (see Fig. 5). This altar is peculiar in shape. It appears to be oblong. The near end has a gable top (cf. Pl. V, F); the middle of the far end of the altar on the Hermitage vase is of the same height as the middle of the near end, but the height of the far end at the corners, although not quite so great as at the middle point, is considerably greater than the height of the near end at the corners, giving the far end an almost flat top (cf. Pl. II, A). Above this top is an object which I take to be a pillow, presumably of stone, banded as are the couch-cushions in many Attic

¹ Hermitage, No. 774; Stephani *Catalogue* II, No. 1636; *Compte-rendu de la Commission de Saint-Petersbourg*, 1869, pl. VI; Reinach, *op. cit.* I, p. 29.

² J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figured Vases in American Museums*, p. 182.

vase-paintings of the best period.¹ I regret very much that I have not been able to study the vase itself or a photograph; either the drawing reproduced in Figure 5 is inaccurate or the vase-painter was careless in detail—for example, where the line of the man's mantle joins the edge of the altar on the left side, and in the upper part of the couch-altar, where at least one line is omitted and others are rendered in a haphazard manner that is wholly confusing. Nevertheless, the main outlines of the couch-altar are discernible and agree with the main outlines of our reliefs; the altar on the Hermitage vase has no acroterion such as once crowned the gable of the relief in Boston, but we find this ornament surmounting a similar altar on a red-figured crater in Bologna.²

On the Hermitage vase the couch-altar stands on a low platform having but one step. Only one of the four men stands on the platform. The dimensions of the near end of the altar as measured by his height correspond admirably to the dimensions of the Boston end of our monument (height at centre 0.96 m.). Experiment has proved that our reliefs look best when raised some five feet above the ground. This is a wholly reasonable elevation for an altar on a platform in a small sanctuary. It is not the elevation of the couch-altar in the vase-painting, but I do not claim that this vase-painting represents the actual couch-altar at Phlya; yet I do not admit that the vase-painter, if representing the couch-altar at Phlya, might not have simplified it and made his platform lower and smaller than the real one, in order to preserve unity and balance in his beautiful composition.

Let us add this item, therefore, to our hypothesis and suppose the monument we are studying to have been a ritual couch or couch-altar which stood within the sanctuary of the Lycomids at Phlya. The size and style of the monument make it reasonably certain that the sanctuary was small and of the Ionic order, like the shrines so frequently seen on red-figured vases.³ The breadth of the marbles in Rome and in Boston measured inside is the same;

¹ Cf. Reinach, *op. cit.* I, pp. 32, 56 (5), 217 (7), 232 (2), 233, 241, 247. Miss Richter, whose knowledge of Greek furniture is much greater than mine, dissents from this view.

² Reinach, *op. cit.* I, 233. Mr. Parsons considers that an acroterion would mar the beauty of the Boston relief and thinks that the piece set in was nothing more than the top of the gable.

³ *E.g.* Reinach, *op. cit.* I, pp. 105, 158, 167.

outside the Boston piece is larger by the width of the scroll frame which the relief in Rome has lost. Except on their carved surfaces, both marbles show a noticeable lack of the regularity and finish which are characteristic of fifth century work. Not only must their inner surfaces have been invisible, but it is hard to understand how they could have formed parts of any carefully constructed object. These irregularities suggest the interesting possibility that the marbles enclosed a mound of earth or turf, which would be thoroughly appropriate as couch or altar of the Great Earth goddess. The stone pillow and the scroll frames would give sufficient definiteness to the meaning of the monument.

We seem to be on the verge of the great Attic mystery. Into the couch of Mother Earth was probably sprinkled seed grain; this seems to be what the man officiating on the Hermitage vase is doing, using for the purpose a fluted bowl of special type. The couch becomes the tomb of the grain. Carefully tended, the seed soon sent up tender green shoots, the *χλοερὸν στάχυν*, which, at Eleusis, "reaped in silence"¹ typified the culminating mystery of birth, or, to Orphics, of rebirth. Probably the same meaning was attached to the rite at Phlya. On the Hermitage vase the older youth bears a shallow bowl in which are set sprays of willow. A slender tree, probably a willow, stands behind the group of men. We know that Polygnotus, whose influence was very great in all the arts of the fifth century, painted Orpheus "touching some sprays of willow."² The mystery of the growing plant is pictured on many Attic vases; once it appears with Orpheus,³ once women are regarding it,⁴ once it is in a small shrine;⁵ sometimes a tree seems to spring from an altar.⁶ We remember that at Phlya Dionysus was called Flowery, and Demeter the Sender-up of Gifts (Anesidora), epithets that clearly have to do with vegetation. The other youth on the Hermitage vase holds an object like a spit as if for burnt sacrifice, but it is to be noted that the sacrificial fire, although close to the altar, is very carefully

¹ St. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk. V, ch. III, quoted in full by Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 549, note 1, and p. 550.

² Paus. X, 30, 6, quoted by Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 603.

³ Reinach, *op. cit.* II, p. 2 (3).

⁴ Reinach, *op. cit.* II, p. 3 (1).

⁵ Reinach, *op. cit.* II, pp. 17, 18.

⁶ Reinach, *op. cit.* II, pp. 78, 90.

depicted as not issuing from it. Not burnt offerings, but first fruits were the gifts of the ancient cult of which the Hermitage vase and our reliefs are memorials.

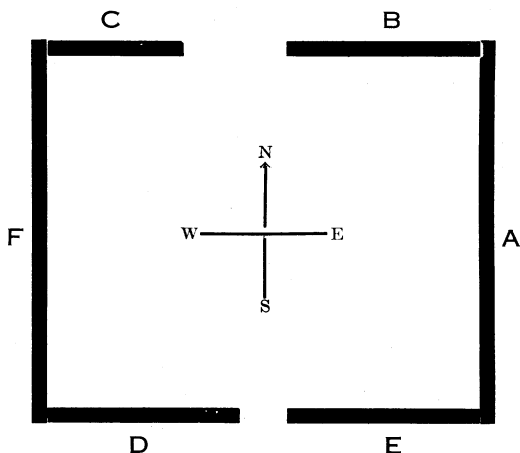


FIGURE 6.—PLAN OF COUCH-ALTAR.

On the principal end (A), at the head of the couch-altar (Fig. 6), was carved with exquisite grace the Earth Goddess; on the other end (F) were Demeter, Eros and Persephone; the four side pieces (B, C, D, E,) adjoining the two ends, were also carved and must now be studied. Following the principles of fifth century composition, we should expect the figures on them to be not gods, but mortals.

The veiled figure B has suggested to many minds a priestess, engaged in some mystic rite. I would give her either the general name hierophant, or the more specific name Telete. We know that Phlya was a centre of Orphism; on Helicon, Pausanias saw "a statute of Orpheus the Thracian with Telete standing by his side."¹ Miss Harrison translates Telete as "Rite of Initiation." It is an appropriate title for this mysterious figure with the censer standing before her, into which she gravely drops incense from a pyxis held in her left hand.

Facing her is an older woman C. The other mortals, B, D, E, as well as Demeter and the Maid sit upon cushions. This old crone sits upon the ground—the ground hidden by a scroll-frame so beautiful that only a Greek hand could have carved it. Her

¹ Paus. IX, 30, 4.

dress, the arrangement of her hair, proclaim her lowly station, her age is marvelously depicted, but I find no suggestion of degradation; in fact, the artist has given character, even dignity to her deeply wrinkled face, her quiet pose, and furrowed hand.

The realism revealed in the figure is a surprise, but I think we are only at the beginning of lessons we have to learn about Greek realism of the fifth century. I have recently seen a fifth century gem that will rank with the art of any land and any time in the faithful portraiture of an intellectual man.¹ Overbeck² gives a fifth century date (460–420 B.C.) to the Attic sculptor Demetrius, who was so renowned for his realism that Lucian called him “a maker not of statues but of men.” The fame of this artist rested largely on his statue of an aged priestess. According to Pliny, “*Demetrius Lysimachen (fecit) quae sacerdos Minervae fuit LXIII annos.*”³ Dr. Reisch connects with this masterpiece an inscribed base from the Acropolis (*C.I.G.* II, 3, 1376) which must belong to the earlier half of the fourth century and thinks the working period of Demetrius lay between 390 and 350 B.C.⁴ He follows Michaelis (second edition Jahn’s *Arx Athenarum*) in believing that another inscribed base found on the Acropolis (*C.I.G.* II, 3, 1378) supported a statuette of an old woman which is mentioned by Pausanias.⁵ If Dr. Reisch is right, this old woman was not Lysimache herself, but her helper in the temple service (*διάκονος*), for whom Reisch supplies the name Syeris, wrongly transcribed *εὐήρις* in manuscripts of Pausanias. He argues that the likeness of Syeris, wrought by the painter-sculptor Nicomachus not later than 330 B.C. was one of the popular wonders of the Acropolis, more subtle in its realism than the work of Demetrius. He thinks the inscription was cut at a later date, when the statuette was moved to a more conspicuous position. Copies of these statues of the priestess and her ministrant he recognizes in a marble head in the British Museum and a bronze figurine in the Hof Museum at Vienna. The interest and realism displayed in depicting old women of the fourth century would suggest, even without the evidence of the Boston relief, that earlier experiments had been made in that direction. Greek artists of successive generations were wont to try their hand on the

¹ Beazley, *The Lewes House Collection of Ancient Gems*, pl. III, 50.

² Overbeck, *Gesch. d. griech. Plastik*,⁴ I, p. 503.

³ Pliny, *N. H.* XXXIV, 76.

⁴ *Jh. Oest. Arch. I.* XIX–XX, pp. 299–316. I thank Mr. Dinsmoor for this reference.

⁵ Paus. I, 27, 4.

same stock of themes and the importance of the "old woman" in Attic Mysteries would invite their attention.¹

We cannot call the old woman of the Boston relief Lysimache or Syeris, but I do propose for her the general title ministrant (*διάκονος* translated "deaconess" in the New Testament) and I think it worth while to note that below the epigram on the base that is supposed to have supported the statue of Lysimache, in a broken line which once gave the name of either the subject or the donor of the statue, occurs the demotic "of Phlya." Reisch completes the line as referring to "Lysimache, mother of Hierokles of Phlya." The fragment certainly points to a link between the aged priestess so realistically portrayed by Demetrius and the deme where our Boston relief was carved, with its admirable representation of an old woman. Is this a mere coincidence, or is there here a real contact that deserves further investigation? At present I have not the data needed to answer this question.

An important question confronts us now. What did the old ministrant hold in her hand and what stood in front of her, crowding her and yet permitting her right foot to be completed in a way curious indeed for a relief? The object held in her hand has been carefully chiseled away; a piece of marble is missing that must have completed the design below to the extent of the scroll, making a width equal to that of the priestess wing. One can hardly do more than suggest a reason for these mutilations. May it not be that when this monument had been carried from Attica to Rome, pagans, out of reverence for the Mysteries, or Christians, out of hatred for the Mysteries, destroyed certain mystic emblems that were carved upon it? It may be rash to attempt a restoration. A careful study of the stone, however, has led me to the belief that the object held in the old woman's hand was a horn,² symbol of fertility—an important mystic at-

¹ J. Bankó, *Jh. Oest. Arch.* I. XIX-XX, p. 298.

² I wish to record here my special debt to my husband, who patiently denied me one false restoration after another, carefully drawing for me the marks on the stone. Dr. Caskey's drawing, *A.J.A.* 1918, p. 115, fig. 5, I find somewhat misleading. The left hand as restored in it does not seem to me convincing; the marks left on the stone by the object held in the right hand have been confused, I think, with the unevenness of the background, notably on the right side above the thumb. The background of D is quite as uneven as this part of C and there is no doubt that the artist sought to achieve contrast and play of light by leaving his backgrounds slightly rough (this point was brought to my attention by my friend, Mrs. Eleanor Winslow, who has a practical understanding of painting and sculpture). It is to be remembered that an

tribute of the Great Goddesses and of Hades-Dionysus, which was often carried by mortals in their worship.¹ It probably has prehistoric connection with Crete and, as the cornucopia, it had a

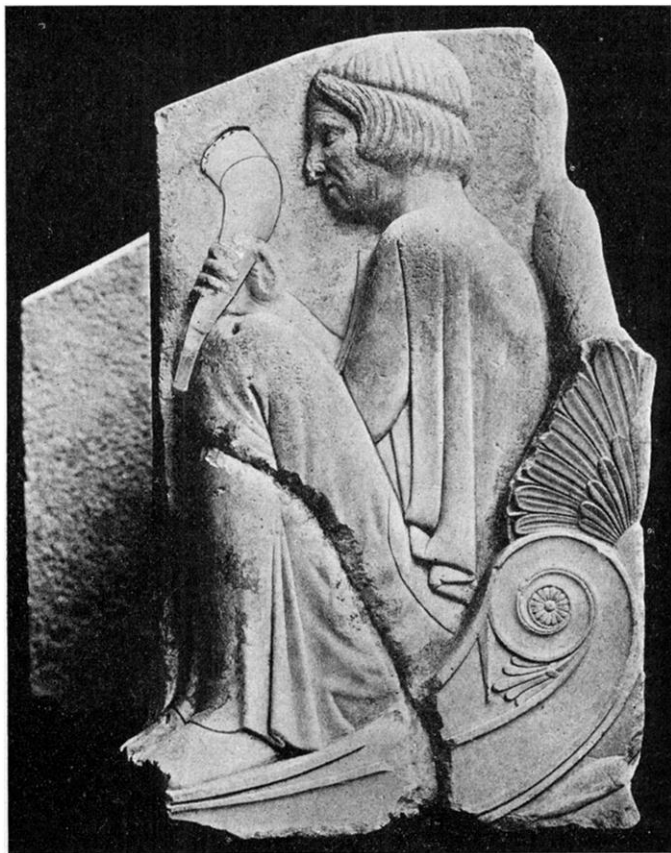


FIGURE 7.—AGED WOMAN WITH HORN RESTORED: BOSTON.

object carved in relief, when chipped away, may leave an outline on the stone somewhat different from its own form in profile, and also that the hand of the destroyer may slip. Yet, with even these allowances, the restorations which have been proposed by Studniczka and others are impossible, as is agreed by all who have studied most closely the original marble reliefs in Boston.

¹ The horn held in the hand of feasters at funeral banquets is too frequent to need citation; the same is true of the horn in the hand of Dionysus. On a black-figured lecythus in Vienna six women seem to be carrying horns, led by a minstrel, whom I name Orpheus rather than Apollo; the figure behind them is sprinkling from a shallow bowl upon an altar. Cf. Fig. 5 above (Reinach, *op. cit.* II, p. 224, 2).

very popular late history among the Romans in the hands of Ceres and all her derivatives, Abundance, Fortune, etc. The horn, as it appears on many monuments, has that combination of straight top and tapering curves which the marks on the marble require. *The hand could grasp it and yet leave visible the deep wrinkle in the palm.* The tapering end might easily follow the curve of the old woman's knee, conforming to the indications that we find and stopping short at the exact point where one feels a ridge in the marble. By a remarkable coincidence, our Boston Museum of Fine Arts possesses, in its collection of musical instruments, a Forester's Horn that fits almost exactly the space once filled by the unknown object, which the old woman held in her hand. It is an ox-horn with metal flare, metal bands, and mouthpiece. A photograph of the horn, minus the metal additions at the two ends, has been applied to a photograph of the relief and the two rephotographed together, affording a more convincing proof than any drawing could be (Fig. 7). Artistic considerations, which are of prime importance in dealing with a fine piece of sculpture, seem to favor this restoration; for the curves of the horn are in themselves beautiful and they combine admirably with the other lines of the composition in respect to both relief and background. Appropriate objects to have occupied the space in front of the ministrant would be the mystic winnow-corb (*liknon*) and the oar-shaped winnow-fan (*ptuon*), or the still more mysterious Snake.¹

At first I was inclined to attribute the position of the old woman—the fact that she sits without cushion on the ground—to her humble station in life. But as the conviction has grown upon me that she is closely connected with the celebration of the Mysteries of the Great Goddesses, I am led to believe that her attitude has a ritual significance. Plutarch's statement in reference to the great Athenian festival, "the women fast at the

¹ An ex-voto from Delos shows a snake with two worshippers carrying horns (*B.C.H.* 1907, p. 526; Reinach, *Répertoire des reliefs* II, p. 328). A Roman relief (Reinach, *Répertoire des reliefs* II, p. 5 (2, 3)) has an altar with an offering of first fruits, the horn and a snake; it is connected with the cult of Thibilis (Annona), a personification of the year's produce—an interesting fact, since our reliefs were unearthed in Rome near a site that was associated with Annona. The winnow-corb and fan occur with the horn on many Roman statues of Ceres, Abundance and Fortune (see Reinach's *Répertoire de la statuaire grecque et romaine*). St. Hippolytus, *loc. cit.*, has much to say about the worship of the snake.

Thesmophoria, seated on the ground,"¹ probably gives the clue. The autumn festival of the Thesmophoria, like the winter Haloa, was celebrated in honor of the Great Goddesses; with whom Dionysus is associated at the Haloa.

Probably the closest parallel in extant art to our old crone is the foremost figure on a relief from Olympia now in the Ny Carlsberg Museum at Copenhagen (Fig. 8).² It represents an old



FIGURE 8.—RELIEF FROM
OLYMPIA: COPENHAGEN.

woman watching a horse-race and recalls the fact that the only matron allowed to see the Olympic games was the priestess of Demeter *Chamyne*, who sat upon a white marble altar opposite the umpires.³ This epithet *Chamyne*, derived from the word *χαμαι*, meaning "on (or of) the ground," identifies Demeter with the Earth Goddess,⁴ and the same thought wove the story of Demeter sitting on the Laughless Stone by the side of the Well of Fair Dances, sorrowing for the loss of her Daughter.⁵ It is altogether fitting, therefore, that the ministrant of Demeter's Mysteries at Phlya should so far imper-

sonate the goddess as to be seated on the ground.

If this interpretation is correct, the reliefs on the north side of the ritual couch had to do with the august Mysteries of the Great Goddess and her counterparts, Demeter and the Maid, the reliefs on the south side celebrated the Mysteries of Love. All belonged to the Orphic circle, and sharp discrimination must be avoided.

On the south side the youth playing the lyre (D) is a typical young aristocrat of Athens, a Lycomid, in fact, whose son will represent him in the cavalcade of youthful knights on the Parthenon frieze. We know how often Attic vase-painters of the best period took their themes directly from Homer. Pausanias

¹ Plut. *de Is. et Os.* LXIX, quoted by Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 128.

² For this interesting parallel and the illustration I am indebted to Miss B. Kahnweiler.

³ Paus. VI, 20, 9.

⁴ Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 405.

⁵ Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 127.

quotes two lines from Homer's description of Achilles' shield which exactly fit this figure.¹

"And in their midst a boy upon a clear-toned harp

Played charmingly, and as he played he sang of Linus fair."

St. Hippolytus has associated Linus with Musaeus and Orpheus in his notice of the orgies at Phlya. Pausanias has told us "the poets Pamphos and Orpheus composed poems on Love to be sung by the Lycomids at the performance of their rites": "The Lycomids know them (the hymns of Orpheus) and chant them over their rites." I think we need not inquire further for the identity of the beautiful boy. The artist may have remembered the verses of Homer, but he had seen the young Lycomid in the flesh.

Finally we come to the flute-player, E, who, like the singing boy, is an art type dear to the vase-painters of Athens. Miss Radford² was right in insisting upon the close connection between the figure on the relief and the hetaira on the psycter,³ signed by Euphronius, which we hope still exists in the Hermitage Museum. The sculptor was a younger contemporary of the vase-painter. They may have been friends. The vase was painted several decades before the relief was carved; but, as Dr. Caskey pointed out, it is not probable that the relief was copied from it. A more natural explanation is that the relief takes the place of an older one, destroyed by the Persians, from which Euphronius drew his inspiration. Beside the flute-player on the vase is scratched retrograde the word ΣΕΚΛΙΝΕ; the flute-player of the relief was actually carved on the ceremonial *kline* in the *klosion*. Whether the punning name Sekline is an imperative σέ κλινε "lie down"⁴ (the position of the reflexive pronoun does not seem to me correct for this translation, especially in rapid speech), or a colloquial form for εἰς κλινήν "to bed!" (clipping the beginning and end and inserting ε)⁵—in either case the meaning is the same. A certain air

¹ Paus. IX, 29, 7.

² J.H.S. XXXV, 1915, p. 111.

³ Stephani *Catalogue* II, No. 1670; *Compte rendu de la Commission de St. Pétersbourg*, 1869, p. 219; Hoppin, *A Handbook of Attic Red-Figured Vases*, I, p. 404; Reinach, *op. cit.* I, p. 32 (1, 2). Cf. Caskey, *A.J.A.* XXII, 1918, p. 117, fig. 6.

⁴ P. Kretschmer, *Griech. Vasenschriften*, p. 209, quotes Klein *Liebblingsnamen*, p. 65.

⁵ Jannaris. *Hist. Gr. Gram.* §130, 536. App. III, § 22, 24. These changes, although recorded only for later times, may have occurred in slang during the classical period.

played on the flute may have had this meaning. In the chapel of the Lycomids the rites of Love belonged to the realm of ideas, the flute-player there was a ritual figure; on the Euphronius vase the meaning was festal, sensual.

Our interpretation of the reliefs is finished. In brief form what are our conclusions? For the sake of simplicity, I will summarize them as statements of fact, although I am well aware that they are disputable and must submit to critical examination.

The so-called "Ludovisi Throne" and the Boston relief formed the ends and adjoining side pieces of a couch-altar made between 479 and 471 B.C. for the sanctuary of the Lycomids at Phlya, which had been burnt by the Persians in the Second Persian War and was restored by Themistocles. The Lycomids ranked first among the rural aristocracy of Attica and claimed to be autochthonous; tradition placed a home of the clan near the Ismenus river in Boeotia. Their clan sanctuary in Phlya, a fertile deme five miles northeast of Athens—the home of Euripides (born 480 B.C.)—was well known for at least seven hundred years; it was called by Plutarch a *telesterion*, Place of Initiation, by Pausanias a *klision*, Place of the Couch, by St. Hippolytus a *pas-tas*, Marriage Chamber. We may surmise that the Persians burned it out of enmity for their most determined opponent, Themistocles, who was in some way connected with the Lycomid clan. After the Greek victory Themistocles took pains to rebuild the sanctuary, and our reliefs form a part of his restoration. The shrine was decorated with mural paintings and is known to have contained at least one statue.

The couch-altar stood on a stepped platform about five feet above the ground. Probably the reliefs enclosed a mound of earth, which played the part of the marriage bed of the Great Earth Mother; into it the seed was cast, from it the first tender shoots of grain were reaped in Mysteries which are known to have antedated the Mysteries at Eleusis, and which were concerned chiefly with the miracle of Life.

The relief at the head of the couch-altar, which, for convenience I call the east end, represented Earth the All-Mother, supported by two attendants; the idea may be further defined as Earth giving birth to Erechthonius, mythical ancestor of the Lycomids, or to Phlyus, mythical hero of the deme, or in the rôle of Ilithyia to Eros, or as Semele to Dionysus, a later impersonation of Eros; if the last explanation is preferred, the birth may be

supposed to take place on Ismenus' shore (Euripides, *Bacchae* 7) near the ancient home of the Lycomids, and the attendants may be called the Ismenian nymphs. The relief at the foot of the couch-altar (west end) showed Eros, erect, weighing the lots of men, with Demeter seated on the left and Persephone seated on the right—the former a very human goddess of the upper world, the latter already withdrawn into the remoteness of the underworld. On the north side of the couch-altar two women were seated, facing each other; at the left end a priestess or hierophant, who may be called Telete, the Rite of Initiation, at the right an aged ministrant, holding in her hand the mystic horn, with other mystic emblems at her feet. These draped figures have to do with the mysteries of Earth, who was called at Phlya "the Great Goddess," and of her counterparts, Demeter and Peresphone. On the south side of the couch-altar two nude figures were seated, facing each other, who have to do with the mysteries of Love; at the left end a young Lycomid playing his lyre as he sings the hymns of Orpheus, at the right end a young woman playing on the flute an air which may have been a call to the rites of Eros. The ideas embodied in all these reliefs are of the class called Orphic; derived from the pre-Hellenic religion of the Aegean islands and adjacent coasts, they were made to live anew by contact with the humanizing, story-telling faculty of the Hellenes. There is in these reliefs a dignity and beauty worthy of Greek genius at its best, that is as different from the too numerous caricatures of Orphism in the minor arts as is a play of Euripides from the coarsest buffoonery of the Greek satyric drama.

If this interpretation of the much admired reliefs is confirmed and they are recognized as adornments of a couch-altar that stood in the sanctuary which Themistocles restored for the Lycomids at Phlya, it will be hard to exaggerate their importance for the history of art, the older religion of Greece, Orphism, clan-cults of Attica, and the background of Euripides. The fact that they were found in Rome is not a stumbling-block. Pausanias seems not to have seen them, unless they are implied under his mention of the altar of "Earth whom they name the Great Goddess." More probably the reliefs were no longer in the sanctuary when Pausanias visited Phlya. He tells us that the marble statue of Love made by Praxiteles for the Thespians was carried to Rome by Caligula, restored by Claudius, and carried away again by

Nero. In fact, Roman connoisseurs especially coveted representations of Love. We readily understand how much the reliefs must have pleased the Romans although they were quite incapable of understanding them. Their meaning has not been recognized by archaeologists because it is associated with the Mysteries and Orphism, of which we have heard much but known little.

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